THE LIBERATION OF HARVEST
CAMPAIGN GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

The Halo universe is filled with events and history that has yet to be explored in canon media. My goal with this project is to create a scenario involving space battles during the earliest months of the Human-Covenant War. When it comes to fleet action in the Halo universe, most of what is seen in the video games and books are battles which occurred late in the war. These battles depicted a desperate struggle with few remaining vessels against a superior alien foe. During the first few months of the war, the UNSC likely had the resources to sustain prolonged engagements with the Covenant and even win.

This would have been a time of victory and great hope for the UNSC before attrition began to take its toll. This is the era during the war which I want to explore. This campaign is intended to be lore informed while also having the epic moments that Halo is known for in the games and novels. With that being said, I cannot represent the Halo universe as well as the company that owns it can. Therefore, it is encouraged that players engage in this campaign however they see fit.

In all except for one, there are options to play through missions without any expansion material. This is due to the fact that expansion materials are now extremely difficult to find. Either way, if you do not like my choice of ships or commanders, change them! There are also optional rules available to facilitate interesting tactics that could not be used in a standard game. The fleet commander cards used can be found in the files section of the Halo: Fleet Battles Facebook group. The statistics for the Halcyon light cruiser were created by Cody Nance. The card for Admiral Cole that is recommended is part of Chris' Wave 2 of card expansions made by Chris Smith found in the same files section. With that being said, I hope you enjoy the game!

OPTIONAL CAMPAIGN RULES

OPTIONAL RULE 1: UNKNOWN ENVIRONMENTS

Many of the space battles during the Human-Covenant War occurred without the use of boarding parties. This happened for many reasons including keeping forces reserved for planetary invasions as well as a general unfamiliarity with the inner workings of enemy vessels. Players may choose to engage in this campaign without Boarding Craft in order to have a more fast paced and true to lore way of playing.

OPTIONAL RULE 2: MARTYRDOM

During the Movement Phase of a Selected Battle Group, the player in control of the Battle Group may choose to place two Countdown Tokens on a SINGLE Elements in said Battle Group. This represents venerable commanders and zealous shipmasters making the decision to sacrifice themselves as well as their vessels for the sake of the larger battle. Victory Points are allocated as normal.

OPTIONAL RULE 3: OCCUPIED WINGS

There are many times during prolonged planetary combat in which numerous wings of fighters and bombers are engaged in ground campaigns. These are unable to support space combat operations. Players may choose to play through this campaign without wings.

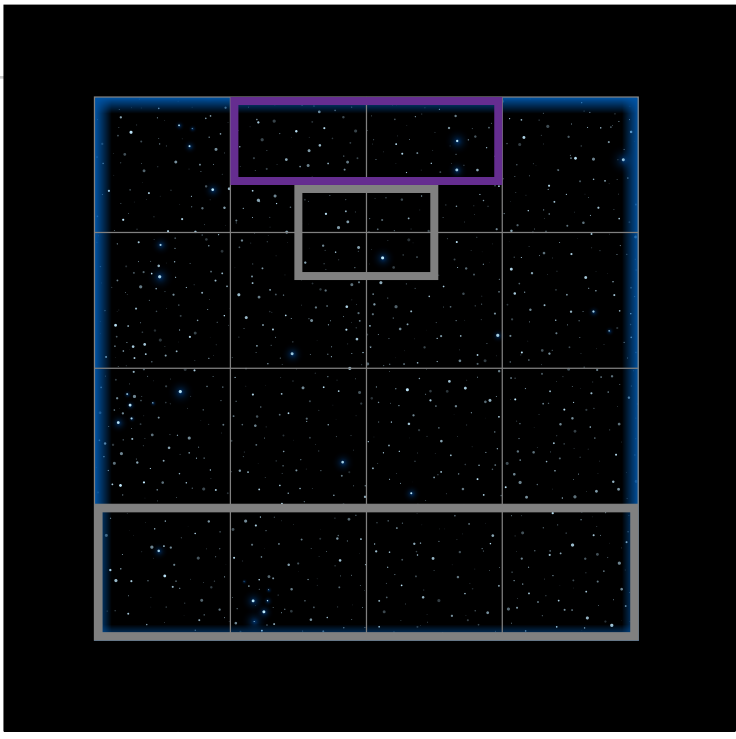
THE LIBERATION OF HARVEST

The year is 2526. The alien alliance known as the Covenant has declared war against humanity. Their first target was the agricultural colony of Harvest. The entire colony was destroyed during the conflict by the ensuing orbital bombardment, killing millions. Despite the overwhelming destruction, hundreds of freighters managed to escape the doomed world carrying hundreds of thousand of refugees to safety.

The UNSC response was swift. Battle group four set out in order to investigate Harvest's situation. Three vessels left for this mission. Only one heavily damaged destroyer returned. With the impending threat of an alien alliance with unknown strength, a fleet was assembled with the purpose of meeting the Covenant in battle headon. The controversial military mastermind Preston Cole was selected to lead the largest fleet in UNSC military history.

As the battle raged over the fallen world, nearly a dozen UNSC vessels were lost to void and plasma. The single Covenant super destroyer was more than a match for Admiral Cole's combined fleet; however, the Covenant were no match for Cole's genius. Synchronized MAC barrages, nuclear strikes, and missile vollies brought the colossal warship down. With humanity's first victory having been achieved, morale rose, citizens across human space enlisted, and hope flourished. Unfortunately, what would eventually become known as the Human-Covenant War had only just started.

MISSION ONE: THIS IS OUR LAND!



The fierce winds pierced Corporal Martin like a machete, despite the layers of cloth and protective grey armor that he wore. The man found himself once again counting his supplies and ammunition. He sifted through MA5B assault rifle rounds with fingertips tinged with purple from the cold. As he meticulously counted all 54 standard rounds and 13 shredder rounds, Corporal Martin began to wonder how long they would last. He might get through one more firefight but perhaps two if he was better disciplined with his ammo.

Rations were scarce. Men were scarce. Everything was scarce ever since the Covenant gained supremacy in the space over Harvest. It had been this way for a month now. It was impossible for the fleet to bring supplies to the troops on the surface. Martin wondered how much longer his unit could hold out in such conditions.

The Covenant were certainly a force to be reckoned with but it was the elements which were slowly killing his unit. Keeping constant movement was one of the only ways to keep warm out here. Corporal Martin could not remember the last time he had slept. He had seen far too many marines fall asleep and never wake up. It was too great of a risk in this cold. Being from Meridian, Martin had never experienced winter quite like this. Some of the Earth-born marines acclimated more easily but still suffered.

Suddenly, the harsh whine of plasma fire accompanied by the barking of Covenant grunts echoed across the frozen plains. His mind snapped into focus as marines raised their rifles above the trenchline. He slapped the magazine into the MA5B and chambered a round with the usual metallic click. Breathing deeply, the Corporal took aim, raised the digital crosshairs over one of the squat aliens, and squeezed the trigger.

“Full speed ahead! Those Covy bastards are on our ass! What are our engines running at? Ensign, I’m talking to you!”

Ensign Williams staired frozen at his display. Over a dozen Covenant vessels were pursuing The UNSC Olympus into the asteroid field. Their bulbous finned hulls reminded him more of giant predatory fish than of warships. He heard the captain in the back of his mind but still sat paralyzed. Williams could not believe that this was their mission. Luring Covenant ships into an ambush, this was suicide for the Olympus.

“Ensign, God damn it what’s our reactor output?”

The command snapped the young man into reality as he read off of the monitor, “We’re running at 90%, sir!”

“Is there a uranium shortage? Give me 110% now!”, the captain called back sharply.

“Aye aye, sir!”

As he typed in the command to override first level reactor safeties, Williams desperately hoped that Admiral Cole knew what he was doing. They had to get relief to the marines fighting on the surface. Luring a portion of the Covenant fleet into an ambush was undoubtedly a smart move. The Ensign simply was not sure if he would live long enough to see Cole’s strategy work.

The Battlefield: 4' x 4'
Covenant Deployment Zone: 24" x 8" as per the Scenario Map.
UNSC Deployment Zones: 48" x 12" and 12" x 8" as per the Scenario Map.

TERRAIN

Terrain is placed at the discretion of the players. Liberal use of asteroids and other such terrain pieces is ideal for this mission.

DEPLOYMENT

The UNSC player must deploy all Elements first, with Battlegroup 1 being placed within the smaller deployment zone. Battle Group 1 must be facing directly towards the other UNSC deployment zone. The Covenant player deploys second.

MAXIMUM TURN LIMIT

The Maximum Turn Limit of this Scenario is 6 Turns with the player scoring the highest being the winner.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

> The **Covenant** will score 1 Victory Point for every BR of UNSC Elements Destroyed.
> The **UNSC** will score 1 Victory Point for every BR of Covenant Elements Destroyed.
> The **UNSC** will score 1 Bonus Victory Point for destroying a Covenant Capital Element.

VICTORY POINT TARGET

There is no Victory Point Target in this Scenario. The player with the most Victory Points at the end of the game is the winner.

THE FORCES

Covenant Fleet: 685 Pts
Fleet Commander: Xytan 'Jar Wattinree 120 Pts (or use Generic Covenant Leader 50 Pts)

Battle Group 1: 310 Pts
1x Paired CCS Battlecruisers (including 2 Zealots)
1x Wing of 4 Seraph Interceptors

Battle Group 2: 255 Pts
1x CPV Heavy Destroyer (including 1 Zealot)
3x SDV Heavy Corvettes (Oblique Formation)
1x Wing of 5 Seraph Interceptors

Optional Battle Group 2: 255 Pts
1x CCS Battlecruiser (including 1 Zealot)
2x SDV Heavy Corvettes (Oblique Formation)
1x Wing of 4 Seraph Interceptors

UNSC Fleet: 785 Pts
Fleet Commander: Preston Cole 200 Pts (or use Generic UNSC Leader 50 Pts)

Battle Group 1: 120 Pts
1x Marathon Heavy Cruiser
1x Paris Heavy Frigates (Trident Formation)
1x Wing of 2 Longsword Bombers

Battle Group 2: 215 Pts
1x Valiant Super Heavy Cruiser
1x Halberd Destroyers (Axe Formation)
2x Paris Heavy Frigates (Trident Formation)
1x Wing of 2 Longsword Bombers

Battle Group 3: 250 Pts
1x Phoenix Colony Support Ship
1x Halberd Destroyers (Axe Formation)
1x Wing of 3 Longsword Bombers

Optional Battle Group 2: 210 Pts
1x Supported Marathon Heavy Cruiser
2x Paris Heavy Frigates (Arrowhead Formation)
2x Paris Heavy Frigates (Trident Formation)
1x Wing of 2 Longsword Bombers

Optional Battle Group 3: 245 Pts
1x Supported Epoch Heavy Carrier
2x Paris Heavy Frigates (Trident Formation)
1x Wing of 5 Longsword Bombers

SPECIAL RULES

Asteroids may be the target of a Firing Solution during this scenario. Small asteroids have a Damage Track of 3-3-3 while large asteroids have a Damage Track of 4-4-4. Asteroids roll no defense dice. Individual asteroids cause a -2 to Firepower Rating.

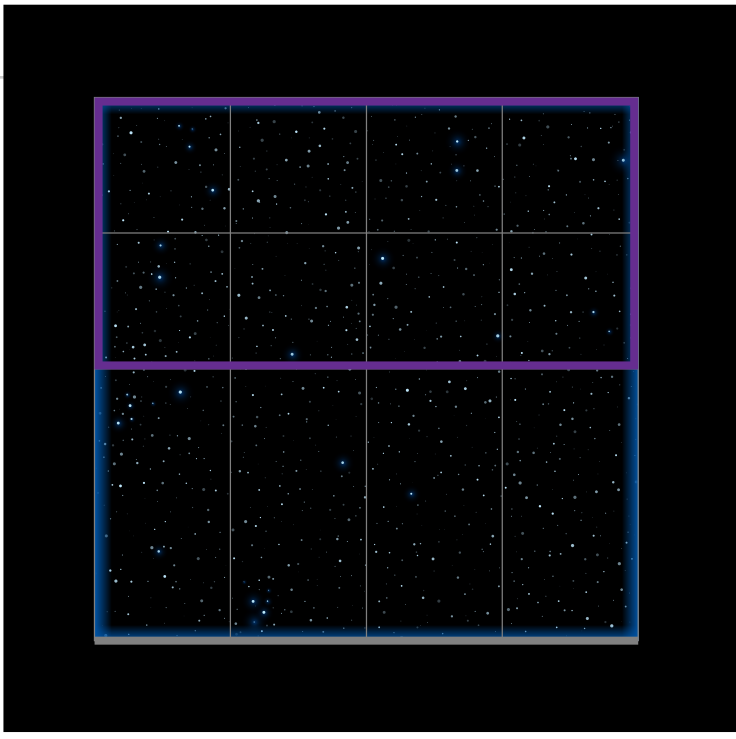
Admiral Cole's Strategic Superiority Ability may not be used.

MISSION TWO: BATTERING RAM

Cheers echoed across the bridge of the UNSC Everest as the Covenant destroyer's engines detonated, sending whirling streams of plasma and liquefied metal into the void. Its roughly spherical frontend then separated and collided with a nearby asteroid, crumpling the frame under the intense pressures exerted by the two bodies. Victory had been achieved at the cost of twenty-one UNSC ships.

Vice Admiral Cole wondered how long this could continue. Each battle resulted in more than twice the casualties taken on by the Covenant. The UNSC was enjoying occasional strategic victories now but even that could not possibly last. With so many hundreds of colonies to defend, soon the UNSC fleet would be spread thin and whittled down to nothing by the Covenant's superior technology and numbers. This war was fundamentally unsustainable. Admiral Cole had to find a way to sustain it. Every battle, he learned more about how the Covenant thought. Ferociously, they charged into battle with almost complete disregard for the condition of their vessels. Perhaps Cole could figure out a way to exploit the unbridled nature of the Covenant's tactics.

After two months of UNSC forces being trapped on Harvest's surface, their supplies; their food would be running severely low if they were not already out. The blockade needed to be broken. Luckily, Cole had had the opportunity during his earlier service to make powerful friends in FleetCom.The Supercarrier from Reach arrived shortly after the battle in the asteroid field. It was four kilometers of pure destructive power, housing the only Super MAC weapons currently in service. If anything could make it past that blockade to Harvest, it was a Supercarrier. Admiral Cole intended to use it for precisely that purpose. Cole knew that Captain Freimann was inexperienced when dealing with this new enemy; however, his reputation during the insurrection gave Preston full confidence in his abilities.



Captain Freimann was dead. Lieutenant Hood could only watch as their massive vessel struck headlong into a Covenant Corvette. The comparatively flimsy vessel was crushed under the Punic's mass, sending streams of plasma cascading across half a kilometer of thick titanium plate armor. The Supercarrier violently changed velocity as it decelerated from the impact. Hood held fast for his life as he witnessed Freimann slam into the console a meter away from his station. Other members of the bridge crew braced themselves while some were knocked unconscious.

"All this for some God forsaken rock?"

Hood thought this as the realization struck him. Lieutenant Hood was now acting Captain of the Punic. He had to act quickly. The vessel was edging closer and closer to the Covenant blockade. MAC rails were charged and missile batteries were warmed up in anticipation of the coming battle.

The Battlefield: 4' x 4'
Covenant Deployment Zone: 24" x 8" as per the Scenario Map.
UNSC Deployment Zones: 48" x 0" as per the Scenario Map.

TERRAIN

This Scenario uses no Terrain unless Players wish to use their own.

DEPLOYMENT

The Covenant deploys all Battle Groups and Wings first. The Order Dice Phase of the first Turn begins with the UNSC gaining initiative. During the Wings Phase of the first Turn, when it is the UNSC's activation, they will move their Wings onto the board from any point along their entry edge, using the Board Edge as the starting point for measuring movement. During the Battle Group Phase, when the UNSC activates a Battle Group, they will first deploy their chosen Battle Group onto the Battlefield with the Formation Bases touching their Board Edge. The Battle Group is then activated normally from that point.

MAXIMUM TURN LIMIT

The Maximum Turn Limit is 8 Turns with the player scoring highest being the winner.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

> The **UNSC** will score 1 Victory Point for every BR that makes it past the Covenant Deployment Zone (marked in green on the Scenario Map).
> Both sides will score 1 Victory Point for Sector Control.
> Both sides will score 1 Victory Point for every BR of Elements Destroyed.

VICTORY POINT TARGET

There is no Victory Point Target in this Scenario. The player with the most Victory Points at the end of the game is the winner.

THE FORCES

Covenant Fleet: 840 Pts
Fleet Commander: Xytan 'Jar Wattinree 120 Pts (or use Generic Covenant Leader 50 Pts)

Battle Group 1: 280 Pts
1x Paired CCS Battlecruisers
1x Wing of 4 Tarasque Bombers

Battle Group 2: 280 Pts
1x Defended CPV Destroyer
1x CPV Heavy Destroyer
1x ADP Escort Ships (Tri-Formation)
1x Wing of 4 Seraph Interceptors

Battle Group 3: 160 Pts
2x SDV Heavy Corvettes (Line Formation)
2x SDV Heavy Corvettes (Oblique Formation)
1x Wing of 4 Seraph Interceptors

Optional Battle Group 2: 270 Pts
1x CCS Battlecruiser
2x SDV Heavy Corvettes (Oblique Formation)
1x SDV Heavy Corvettes (Line Formation)
1x Wing of 5 Seraph Interceptors

UNSC Fleet: 920 Pts
Fleet Commander: Lord Hood 120 Pts (or use Generic UNSC Leader 50 Pts)

Battle Group 1: 775 Pts
1x Punic Supercarrier
2x Wings of 5 Longsword Bombers
1x Wing of 2 Sabre Interceptors

Battle Group 2: 125 Pts
1x Halcyon Light Cruiser
1x Halberd Destroyers (Axe Formation)
1x Wing of 2 Longswords

Optional Battle Group 1: 720 Pts
(Composed of an entire fleet)

Battle Group Alpha: 450 Pts
1x Epoch Heavy Carrier (include 1 Spartan)
1x Epoch Heavy Carrier
1x Wing of 4 Sabre Interceptors
2x Wings of 4 Longsword Bombers

Battle Group Beta: 270 Pts
2x Supported Marathon Heavy Cruisers
2x Paris Heavy Frigates (Trident Formation)

Optional Battle Group 2: 100 Pts
4x Paris Heavy Frigates (Arrowhead Formation)

SPECIAL RULES

In order to complete this mission, the recently promoted Captain Hood must push his ship to its breaking point. Replace the Punic Supercarrier's Hard Burn (1") with Hard Burn (3"). Whenever the Punic chooses to use Hard Burn, place a Single Countdown Token on its Aft Section. Players may choose to use this rule for any Epoch Heavy Carriers or Pheonix Colony Ships in play.

Xytan 'Jar Wattinree has access to highly deadly warships from High Charity itself. Covenant Elements may add +2 Dice to a Plasma Lance or Plasma Beam Firing Solution. If an Element chooses to do this, place a Vulnerable Token on the Element conducting the Firing Solution.

MISSION THREE: OPERATION SHADOWPIERCER

The bonfire warmed Corporal Martin and the remaining marines. The Covenant energy weapons made for excellent firestarters in frigid climates like this. Their ammunition had completely run dry during the last firefight. Many, himself included, had needed to climb over the top into no man's land in order to retrieve Covenant firearms. Most never returned. Using an alien weapon was not nearly as complicated as Martin had anticipated. After awhile, it felt almost as natural as firing a handgun; however, not reloading had been quite difficult to get used to.

Just as he began to rest his eyes for the first time in days, a sound like thunder reverberated across the ground. The booming sounds were repeating. Purple fires dotted a region of the sky. There was a barely visible silhouette there, just behind that fire. It looked like one of the bulbous Covenant destroyers.

It tore across the sky several kilometers away, smoke trailing behind. It collided with immense force, making the ground rumble and sending mushrooming clouds into the air. That was one of their larger vessels. What could have destroyed it? That was when the Punic class supercarrier flew overhead, it's engines burning bright, accompanied by several frigates. They made it through.

The man was stunned. He had never seen a UNSC Supercarrier before let alone in atmosphere. Thrusters pointing straight towards the ground burned bright, keeping the vessel aloft. Particles of ice swirled and shimmered bright blue near the craft's engines. It was the most beautiful sight that Corporal Martin had come across in a very long time.

Over the next several hours, starlight sparsely shined through the snowstorm growing in intensity as Pelican dropships brought down much needed supplies and troops. Frigates dotted the sky, supporting far off battles with missile and salvo fire. On the horizon, a shadow grew. Corporal Martin thought it must have been the Punic moving to assist another group of soldiers. Upon further consideration, the ship appeared too curved to be a UNSC vessel. If it was Covenant, it was massive. The fleet may have broken through the blockade but this fight clearly wasn't over yet.

The canopy of the drop pod slammed shut. A hiss resonated through the coffin-like vehicle as it pressurized. Dropping straight onto a Covenant assault carrier was a nearly suicidal mission. Major Vaughan was confident that Boomerang company could get the job done. The unmistakable beeps sounded the pod deployment.

"Let's clean up the Navy's mess! Where are we going, troopers?"

"Hell, sir!"

"And how are we getting there?"

"Feet first!"

"HOORAH!", the ODSTs yelled in unison over the radio.

The Spirit of Fire dropped the pods as skirmishes took place across the planet's orbit. Falling through the frostbitten atmosphere, the pods shook and rumbled as fire lapped at their undersides. The clouds parted. There it was, the Covenant carrier. Hopefully, the hull breachers under the pods would be strong enough to break that armor.

A frigate shot forward in an attempt to break the carrier's shield before the pods hit. If those shields didn't drop, this would be a short mission. It fired its missiles followed by the flash of a MAC round. The shield flickered and died on the warship's aft section. A lance of energy impaled the frigate like a spear. Fragments tumbled onto Harvest's surface and whirled upward into the sky. A titanium fragment slammed straight into one of the drop pods, destroying it instantly.

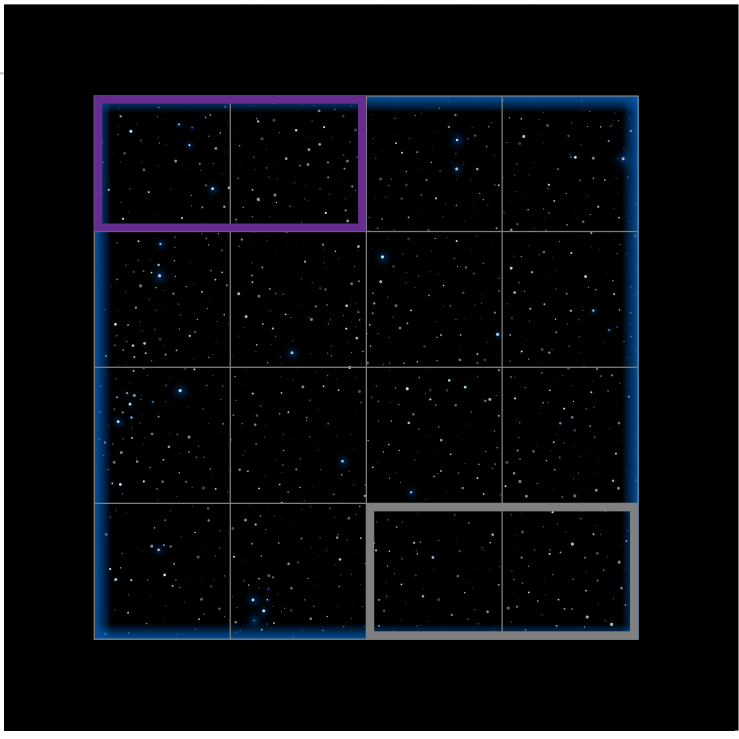
"Adjust trajectory! We're aiming for the aft!"

The pods jerked with the trajectory alteration and again when the deceleration parachute activated. Point defence fire scoured the area. Pod after pod was incinerated as the distance decreased. Boomerang company would be far smaller after this mission. Major Vaughan's pod impacted, tearing through the armor plating. The sudden halt knocked his helmet against the interior wall. He blacked out.

He awoke to banging. Through the window, his blurry vision could make out a large alien attempting to rip the door off. He pulled his sidearm out of the pod's interior weapon socket with tremendous effort due to his weakened state. The canopy flew off with a deep angry roar from the creature. Major Vaughan fired straight at the alien's insect-like mouth. Its energy shield deflected the rounds. Picking up the man, it tossed him into the adjacent wall. Just as the alien had ignited its energy sword, a 50 caliber round ripped through the helmet and skull beneath. The creature crumpled. Major Vaughan looked over to where the vapor trail led. Corporal Sparks stood there, sniper rifle trained on the now dead alien.

"Damn, Sparks, you like an entrance don't you?", Vaughan said while panting.

He gave a satisfied shrug, "Come on, boss. We're going to rally in the hangar in five. From there, we're disabling the engines."



The Battlefield: 4' x 4'
Covenant Deployment Zone: 24" x 12" as per the Scenario Map.
UNSC Deployment Zones: 24" x 12" as per the Scenario Map.

TERRAIN

Terrain is placed at the discretion of the players. Use of mountains and other such terrain is recommended.

DEPLOYMENT

Both players roll their 5 Order Dice, the player with the higher number of Command Icons can choose to deploy first or second. Elements Deployed must be placed inside the designated Deployment Zones. If there is a draw, re-roll until a winner is determined. Any Wings formed by a Battle Group are deployed within 8" of any Element within its parent Battle Group.

MAXIMUM TURN LIMIT

The Maximum Turn Limit of this Scenario is 6 Turns with the player scoring the highest being the winner.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

> The **Covenant** will score 1 Victory Point for every BR of UNSC Elements Destroyed.
> The **UNSC** will score 1 Victory Point for every BR of Covenant Elements Destroyed.
> The **UNSC** will score 1 Bonus Victory Point for every CAS Section Destroyed. Both sides will score 1 Victory Point for Sector Control.

VICTORY POINT TARGET

The Victory Points Target is 16.

THE FORCES

Covenant Fleet: 1270 Pts
Fleet Commander: Xytan 'Jar Wattinree 120 Pts (or use Generic Covenant Leader 50 Pts)

Battle Group 1: 260 Pts
1x Paired CCS Battlecruiser
1x Wing of 4 Tarasque Bombers

Battle Group 2: 750 Pts
1x CAS Assault Carrier (Include 3 ODSTs on the Aft Section)
2x Wings of 6 Seraph Interceptors
1x Wing of 3 Tarasque Bombers

UNSC Fleet: 1265 Pts
Fleet Commander: Preston Cole 200 Pts (or use Generic UNSC Leader 50 Pts)

Battle Group 1: 120 Pts
3x Paris Heavy Frigates (Shield Formation)

Battle Group 2: 150 Pts
3x Paris Heavy Frigates (Trident Formation)
3x Paris Heavy Frigates (Arrowhead Formation)

Battle Group 3: 775 Pts
1x Punic Supercarrier (Include a Spartan on the Fore Section)
2x Wings of 5 Longsword Bombers
1x Wing of 4 Longsword Bombers

SPECIAL RULES

Use of nuclear weapons in atmospheric combat with friendly troops on the surface is NOT authorized by UNSC regulations. Shiva warheads may not be used during this scenario.

Admiral Cole's Strategic Superiority Ability may not be used.

MISSION THREE: OPERATION SHADOWPIERCER

Through the snowstorm, fighters evaded and countered one another in desperate maneuvers that were graceful in appearance but were not so to their terrified pilots. One lone Spirit dropship, spotlight gleaming against the frost, veered, rolled, and tumbled its way through the battle. It was heading straight for the Punic. The goliath's once pristine hull was now covered in gashes from plasma lances, dotted in craters from artillery and torpedo fire.

Another salvo of MAC rounds exitted the Supercarrier's dual magnetic accelerator coils with a thunderous roar. The air shook with enough intensity to send entire fighter wings barreling off course. Both Covenant and Human strike craft fell into the low hanging early morning fog of the glassed colony only to never emerge from it. The Spirit rocked from the blast but its sturdy hull and momentum kept the dropship on course.

The MAC salvo collided with the Assault Carrier's seemingly impervious energy shielding. Silver shimmered against the Covenant ship as it took the impact. Longsword bombers broke off from their respective dogfights as they prepared to make their attack runs against the weakened carrier. The lone Covenant dropship was no longer being harassed by Human fighters.

It raced towards one of the Punic's hangers, evading point defence fire for as long as it could. One round grazed the ship's portside pod. Blue-grey smoke poured from the pod, leaving a streaking trail in its wake. The vehicle accelerated. Point defense cannons attempted to adjust their fire too late. The dropship flew directly into one of the open hangars, colliding with a bang and screeching to a halt on the far side. Marine response teams ran to the scene, feet falling hard against the gouged paneling.

They raised their BR55 Service Rifles as the dropship's starboard pod slowly opened. Smoke emanated from the interior. That was when a voice came from the still opening pod.

"Hold your fire!"

Thoroughly confused, the marines lowered their weapons. Five ODSTs emerged from behind the smoke shroud. Their armor was warped in places and singed from near misses by plasma fire. Purple and iridescent blue blood spattered the armor, mostly along their forearms. One of the ODSTs removed a helmet stained with purple. His insignia marked him as a major.

"Can you get a hold of the captain?", Major Vaughan directed at the nearest marine.

"Yes, sir! How did y-"

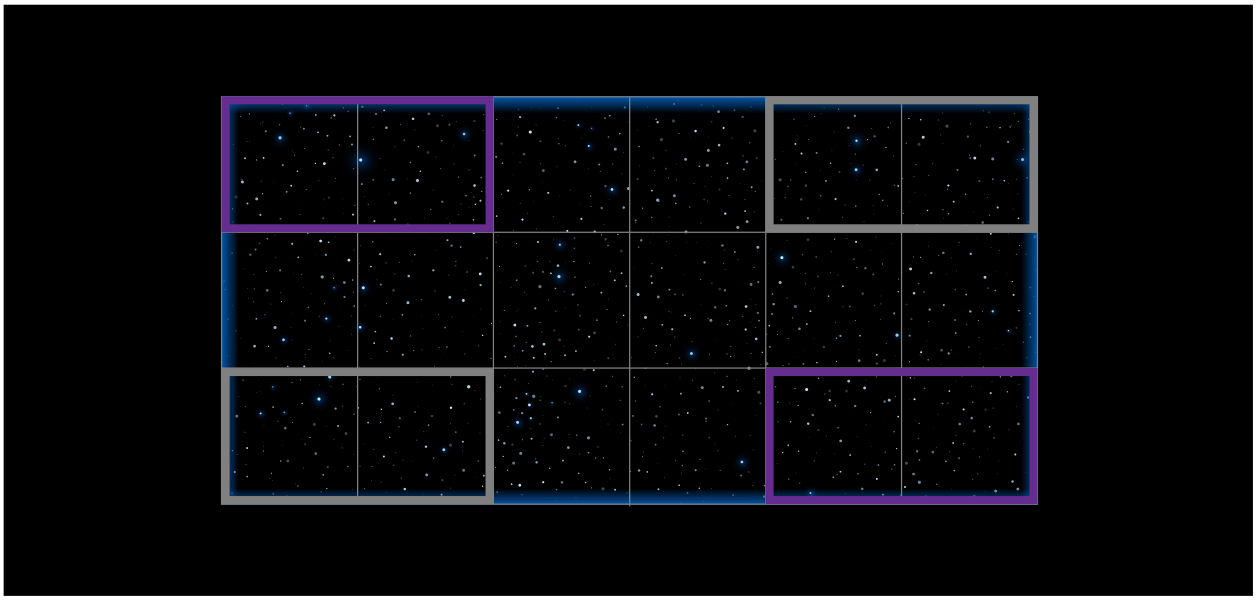
"Doesn't matter, soldier! We've got about 3 minutes before that carrier goes from a threat to a mushroom cloud!"

"Good Lord, you were inside of th- I'll notify him immediately!"

The Supercarrier broke off the attack, burning its engines on a vector directly past the carrier. Captain Hood knew that it was a major risk but it was better than being nearby when the Covenant carrier suffered a critical core breach. Hood ordered the remaining Paris Frigates to cover their escape by keeping the carrier busy. Covenant almost always went after the closest and most aggressive targets.

Each one of those frigates was crewed by at least 100 men. If it meant saving the crew of twenty thousand onboard the Punic, Hood was willing to make that sacrifice. At least, that was how he justified the decision. It took no more than a few seconds for the remaining frigates to be destroyed by plasma torpedoes and lance fire.

The UNSC carrier blazed past the Covenant ship with engines burning white, making full speed out of the atmosphere. Suddenly, a flash enveloped the CAS. Nuclear fire exploded from the aft section of the carrier, rippling through the vessel's superstructure. The shield held in the blast, containing it until whatever mechanism keeping the shields maintained failed. Fire shot out one



mile radially from the nearly vaporized ship. As the intensity of the detonation died, several fragments of the once proud ship fell to the surface of Harvest. The Covenant could be beaten but the price for victory was always too great.

Battles raged in orbit around Harvest. Covenant forces were scattered but UNSC forces were equally scattered fighting them. Both sides were in a desperate state. Heavily damaged ships seemed to be the only ones left. Lines formed and vessels both Human and Covenant prepared to make their final stands in Harvest's orbit. No matter who gained victory, neither side was leaving this fight unfinished.

The Battlefield: 3' x 6'
Covenant Deployment Zone: 36" x 12" and 36" x 12" as per the Scenario Map.
UNSC Deployment Zones: 36" x 12" and 36" x 12" as per the Scenario Map.

TERRAIN

Terrain is placed at the discretion of the players. Use of debri, destroyed ships, and other such terrain is recommended.

DEPLOYMENT

Both players roll their 5 Order Dice, the player with the higher number of Command Icons can choose to deploy first or second. Elements Deployed must be placed inside the designated Deployment Zones. If there is a draw, re-roll until a winner is determined. Any Wings formed by a Battle Group are deployed within 8" of any Element within its parent Battle Group. Players may deploy in either of the given Deployment Zones with any number of Battle Groups.

MAXIMUM TURN LIMIT

There is no turn limit. The game continues until one player reaches the Victory Points target.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

> The **Covenant** will score 1 Victory Point for every BR of UNSC Elements Destroyed.
> The **UNSC** will score 1 Victory Point for every BR of Covenant Elements Destroyed.
> Both sides will score 1 Victory Point for Sector Control.
> Both sides will score 1 Victory Point for every full Battlegroup Destroyed.

VICTORY POINT TARGET

The Victory Points Target is 20.

THE FORCES

Covenant Fleet: 1500 Pts
Fleet Commander: Xytan 'Jar Wattinree 120 Pts (or use Generic Covenant Leader 50 Pts)

Battle Group 1: 260 Pts
1x Supported ORS Heavy Cruiser (include 1 Zealot and 1 Hunter)
1x SDV Heavy Corvette (Oblique Formation)
1x Wing of 4 Tarasque Bombers
1x Wing of 3 Seraph Interceptors

Battle Group 2: 260 Pts
1x Supported ORS Heavy Cruiser (include 1 Zealot and 1 Hunter)
1x SDV Heavy Corvette (Oblique Formation)
1x Wing of 4 Tarasque Bombers
1 x Wing of 3 Seraph Interceptors

Battle Group 3: 380 Pts
2x CCS Battlecruisers
2x SDV Heavy Corvettes (Line Formation)
1x Wing of 5 Seraph Interceptors

Battle Group 4: 380 Pts
2x CCS Battlecruisers
2x SDV Heavy Corvettes (Line Formation)
1x Wing of 5 Seraph Interceptors

UNSC Fleet: 1495 Pts
Fleet Commander: Preston Cole 200 Pts (or use Generic UNSC Leader 50 Pts)

Battle Group 1: 400 Pts
1x Defended Valiant Super Heavy Cruiser (include 1 Spartan)
1x Valiant Super Heavy Cruiser
1x Paris Heavy Frigate (Arrowhead Formation)
1x Wing of 2 Sabre Interceptors

Battle Group 2: 270 Pts
2x Supported Marathon Heavy Cruisers
2x Paris Heavy Frigates (Trident Formation)
1x Wing of 4 Longsword Bombers

Battle Group 3: 220 Pts
1x Supported Epoch Heavy Carrier (include 1 ODST)
1x Paris Heavy Frigate (Arrowhead Formation)
1x Wing of 5 Longsword Bombers

Battle Group 4: 220 Pts
1x Supported Epoch Heavy Carrier (include 1 ODST)
1x Paris Heavy Frigate (Arrowhead Formation)
1x Wing of 5 Longsword Bombers

Battle Group 5: 175 Pts
1x Halcyon Light Cruiser
1x Halberd Destroyers (Axe Formation)
2x Paris Heavy Frigates (Trident Formation)
1x Wing of 2 Longsword Bombers

Optional Battle Group 1: 385 Pts
1x Marathon Heavy Cruiser (Include 1 Spartan)
2x Marathon Heavy Cruisers
1x Wing of 3 Sabre Interceptors

Optional Battle Group 5: 170 Pts
1x Marathon Heavy Cruiser
3x Paris Heavy Frigates (Trident Formation)
1x Wing of 2 Longsword Bombers

SPECIAL RULES

These formations have collided, damaging many vessels in the process. At the start of the game, for every element, roll a Halo Die. On the roll of a Skull, the Element gains a Damage Marker. On the roll of a Miss, nothing occurs. On the roll of a One, nothing occurs. On the roll of a Two, the Element gains a Vulnerable Marker.

EPILOGUE: FIVE YEARS OF HELL

The ride in the Warthog felt unusually smooth. The glassy, ice-covered ground made turning a frightening experience but there was very little to run into. Despite the fact that the headlights were on their brightest setting, it only barely pierced through the swirling snow and ice. Sergeant Lawrence had the wheel while Corporal Martin had his eye on the tracker. Ground teams were being ordered to assist in search and rescue operations as the battle ensued in the skies above.

The Longsword had crash landed several kilometers away from the battle. Pelicans were unable to fly their way through the massive swarms of Covenant fighters. Only ground teams could perform rescue missions. The two marines had been notified that this particular retrieval was of the highest priority. Martin wondered if there was an ONI spook aboard the bomber. He couldn't think of any reason that a spook would get involved in combat. Although, it was ONI.

"The beacon says we're 100 meters out, Sergeant!", Martin yelled over the wind.

"About damn time! Not sure how much more of this wind I can take!"

They followed the gouges left behind by the crash to the fuscilodge of the bomber. As they made visual contact with the crash site, the marines saw a towering silhouette directly in front of the mangled Longsword. It was tall and broad. Corporal Martin had never seen a Covenant Brute before. It fit the description relatively well. The figure was very tall but he had been under the impression that Brutes werte larger; however, large was a relative term. This thing was massive.

"Brute!", Corporal Martin yelled as the Warthog slid to a halt.

He leaned a knee up against the dashboard, firing his assault rifle above the windscreen. It dashed away with striking speed. He had no idea that those aliens were so quick. They had no visual on the hostile.

"Did you see where it went?", Sergeant Lawrence barked as he jumped from the driver's seat of the Warthog, boots striking the ground with the crunch of snow.

"Negative! I can't see it! Might have active camouflage, sir!"

"Stand down, marines!"

They turned. The voice was booming and unmistakably human. Something stepped out from behind a detached Longsword wing. It spoke like a man but it was too tall and broad to be human. The being was ladened in what looked like hundreds of pounds of green armor. It held a BR55 in one hand and looked at the two marines through a golden visor plate. The two tentatively lowered their weapons.

"What are y-"

"Both of you cover your eyes!", the armored giant ordered.

The marines hesitated to which the armored soldier responded, "Do it now!"

Corporal Martin quickly placed a hand over his eyes. Sergeant Lawrence was less receptive to the order. That was when the dark sky briefly turned into daylight. The light seeped in between Martin's tightly clasped fingers.

Lawrence let out a scream. He covered his own eyes but it was too late. The light began to dull enough to safely uncover his eyes and take in the sight of a Covenant assault carrier being torn apart. Where the Covenant ship had once been, was now a cloud of presumably radioactive vapor. The massive human stood, framed by the blazing light.

Corporal Martin took out a small flashlight and checked his Sergeant's eyesight. He was temporarily blind; however, he would recover. The armored man stepped up into the driver's seat of the Warthog, visor glistening against the slowly dying nuclear light. The vehicle almost looked too small. He beckoned them into the vehicle with a hand motion. There was no mistaking the mannerisms. This was a human to some degree.

Questions fired off through his mind as he helped Sergeant Lawrence into the shotgun seat of the vehicle. Was he simply an above average man in some secret program covered up by the Office of Naval Intelligence? That was too simple. It didn't fit what he saw. He could have been some combination of machine and man. Maybe he was a remarkably advanced robot. As Corporal Martin planted a foot on top of the tire, hoisting himself into the Warthog's rear canopy, he doubted that he would ever have a satisfying answer.

He leaned over hesitantly asked the heavily armored man, "Where are we going, sir?"

The man turned slightly in acknowledgement and said calmly, "Alpha Base, Corporal. Then we're going to win this war."